DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 294 IR 053 496

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TITLE Africana Librarianship in the United States to 1960.
PUB DATE 8 Nov 90
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Illinois Library Association/College and Research Libraries Forum Fall Conference (Urbana, IL, November 8-9, 1990).
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Libraries; *African Literature; *African Studies; Higher Education; Librarians; Library Associations; *Library Collection Development; *Library Collections; Public Libraries; *United States History

ABSTRACT

Arguing that Africana librarianship developed in response to changes in the traditional image of Africa and that it influenced that image in turn, this paper focuses on the individuals who shaped Africana librarianship in the United States. The topics discussed include the earliest American examples of Africana librarianship as witnessed in the American Colonization Society; nineteenth century preservation and collection activities of such African-American bibliophiles as Arthur Schomburg; the development of the Schomburg, Moorland, and Wright collections; the leadership of librarians Dorothy Porter and Ernestine Rose; the growth of American library collections on Africa and foreign studies during World War II; cooperation and collection activities between librarians and Africanists; and the subsequent founding of the African Studies Association, which provided the first forum for national library cooperation in 1957. (47 footnotes) (MAB)

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AFRICANA LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES TO 1960

by
Ralph D. Wagner

Presented at the
Illinois Library Association
College and Research Libraries
Conference

November 8, 1990

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"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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My first quote is from Jefferson Davis:

> The slave trade...so far as the African was concerned, was a blessing; it brought him from abject slavery and a barbarian master, and sold him into a Christian land. It brought him from a benighted region, and placed him in one where civilization would elevate and dignify his nature. It is a fact which history fully establishes, that through the portal of slavery alone, has the descendant of the graceless son of Noah ever entered into the temple of civilization.[1]

And my second quote is from Frederick Douglass:

> Under the palms of Africa man finds, without effort, food, raiment, and shelter. For him, there, Nature has done all and he has done nothing. The result is that the glory of Africa is in her palms, not in her men.[2]

What information sources formed such opinions as these? The literature on black Africa available to nineteenth-century Americans consisted mostly of the impressionistic reports of travelers. The assessment of Africans as mentally and morally inferior suited the purposes of the writers; for example, slave traders required an ethical justification while missionaries needed to stress the urgency of winning converts. But alternative views could be found in the Library of Congress in the mid-nineteenth century. Philip Beaver of the British Navy wrote:

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1. *Congressional Globe* (13 February 1850): 284
2. Frederick Douglass, "Self-Made Men," n.d., cited in Waldo E. Martin, *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 209.

> I need not mention the various modes which Europeans also take to overreach the African in trade, by light weights, short measure and diminished capacity, etc., all of which are now so well known to the natives as to us; and therefore...they consider us as a mass of treachery and deceit. There is nothing degrading, nothing base, nothing infamous, but what they consider to form part of the white character.[3]

The Abbe Proyart contributed the following on Portuguese colonization:

> ...if it be worthy the zeal of a Christian prince to favour the propagation of the faith among infidel nations, it is also worthy of his prudence and his duty not to destroy with one hand what he builds up with the other, by sending on the track of the missionaries a set of men who have nothing of the Christian but the name, which they dishonour, and whose worse than heathenish conduct makes the idolaters doubt whether the gods whom they worship be not preferable even to that of the Christian.[4]

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3. Philip Beaver, *African Memoranda, Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa*, in 1792... (London: C. and R. Baldwin, 1805), p. 297.

4. Lievain Bonaventure Proyart, "History of Loango, Kakongo, and Other Kingdoms in Africa" in John Pinkerton, *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1814),

In the same library could be found the works of Ibn Batuta, the medieval Arab geographer, who described life in medieval Mali:

> One of the best things in these parts is, the regard they pay to justice; for in this respect, the Sultan regards neither little nor much [wealth]. The safety, too, is very great; so that a traveller may proceed alone among them, without the least fear of a thief or robber. Another of their good properties is, that when a merchant happens to die among them, they will make no effort to get possession of his property: but will allow the lawful successors to it to take it.[5]

The American research libraries of the nineteenth century contained books on Africa, but not collections focused on Africa. In the absence of a well researched body of knowledge concerning African cultures, information services could not bring the Africana resources to bear on the issues of the day. Africana librarianship developed in response to changes in the traditional image of Africa, and influenced that image in turn. The subject of this paper is the human element, the individuals who shaped Africana librarianship in the United States.

The earliest American example of Africana librarianship was in the American Colonization Society, which promoted the emigration of free blacks to the new Republic of Liberia in the early nineteenth century. The colonization movement accepted the image of Africans as

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vol. 16, pp. 562-563.

5. Ibn Batuta, The Travels of Ibn Batuta (London: Oriental Translation Committee, 1829), p. 240.

degraded, but viewed itself as a momentous effort for African redemption. The goal of establishing a new nation as the nucleus of a transformed Christian Africa required a library of every available piece of information about African geography and peoples. The American Colonization Society used its monthly journal, *African Repository*, to disseminate information on Africa gleaned from books, African and European newspapers, correspondence, publications, and personal reports. Major travel books were given lengthy reviews with comparative analysis. As a result, *African Repository* provides the modern researcher with a bibliography and clipping file on African exploration in the early nineteenth century, of great historical value despite the biased commentary accompanying it.

The archives of the American Colonization Society were remarkable for the time. They were the work of the white clergyman Ralph Randolph Gurley, who served the Society as secretary from 1822 to 1844. Gurley's long tenure and his sense of history ensured that the Society's papers would be organized and preserved with care.[6] From 1839 on he retained copies of outgoing correspondence as well as letters received, an unusual step at a time when all copying was done longhand.[7] In contrast, the competing abolitionist organizations have no surviving deposits of records other than the papers of individual leaders.

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6. P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 305-306.
7. Library of Congress. Manuscript Division, *The American Colonization Society: A Register of its Records in the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1979), pp. 6-7.

The archives of the Society were used by some of Gurley's contemporaries to write histories of the movement and its colony, but only supporters of the movement had access to the files. Abolitionists, who attacked the colonization movement for pitting immigrants against natives, had to rely on published materials.[8] Selective use of the archives was therefore an advantage in the ideological fray.

In 1913, when the Library of Congress received the American Colonization Society's archives and library, the Librarian of Congress described the colonization effort as "an important incident in the social history of the United States," without mentioning its fundamental importance in the social history of Liberia.[9] Here was an

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8. Examples of pro-colonization literature are Archibald Alexander, *A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa* (Philadelphia: W. S. Martien, 1846); Jehudi Ashmun, *History of the American Colony in Liberia, from December 1821 to 1823* (Washington, D.C.: Way & Gideon, 1826); and Ralph Randolph Gurley, *Life of Jehudi Ashmun, Late Colonial Agent in Liberia* (Washington D.C. : James C. Dunn, 1835). For anti-colonization literature see Samuel E. Cornish and Theodore S. Wright, *The Colonization Scheme Considered in its Rejection by the Colored People...* (Newark, N.J.: A. Guest, 1840); William Jay, *An Enquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society, and the American Anti-Slavery Societies* (New York: R.G. Williams for the Anti-Slavery Society, 1835); and G.B. *Stebbins, Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character, and Influence of the American Colonization Society* (Boston: Jewett,

example of the image of Africa as irrelevant. Likewise, the first history of the colonization movement written after the Society's archives were made available makes virtually no reference to conditions in Liberia.[10] Later historical writing, however, has made extensive use of the American Colonization Society records to document the complex relationship between the settlers and the natives of Liberia.[11]

Beginning in the late nineteenth century a number of African-American bibliophiles took up the work of preserving the black past. Their collecting was more than a hobby; they saw their people's historical record as an educational tool to be used against the racist assumptions of the white society around them. In the case of Arthur Schomburg, it was a personal response to a teacher's comment, made

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1835).

9. Librarian of Congress to Johnson, 11 January 1913, American Colonization Society case file, Library of Congress Manuscripts Division.

10. Early Lee Fox, "The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840," Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1917.

11. For example, Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), Svend E. Holsoe, "A Study of Relations Between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847," *African Historical Studies* 4 (1972):331, and Mary Jo Sullivan, "Settlers in Sinoe County, Liberia, and their Relations with the Kru, c. 1835-1920," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1978.

without intended offense, that blacks have no history. Arthur B. Spingarn, a white civil rights lawyer who was closely associated with the black collectors, started his collection as a response to a frequent question, "If the Negro has the capabilities you insist he has, why hasn't he published books to prove it?"[12]

For a guide to the early works of black authors, the collectors referred to a bibliography by Henri Gregoire, an eighteenth-century French bishop and abolitionist.[13] Gregoire's selections were in European languages, and thus skewed away from African authors. The writings of black African authors in African languages and Arabic were both outside the European book trade and incomprehensible to Gregoire. Thus the American collectors had few resources on African authorship. When the Library of Congress sent a collection of works by 152 black authors to the Paris Exposition of 1900, the black collector Daniel Murray selected only one African author, Edward Blyden, a Liberian born in the Virgin Islands.[14] When Schomburg

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12. Arthur B. Spingarn, "Collecting a Library of Negro Literature," *Journal of Negro Education* 7 (January 1938):15.

13. Henri Gregoire, *De la Litterature des Negres, ou, Recherches sur leurs Facultes Intellectuelles* (Paris: Maradan, 1808); idem., *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties and Literature of Negroes* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Thomas Kirk, 1810.). In Gregoire's time the term *negre* did not have the racist connotations it has in modern French.

14. Daniel Murray, *Preliminary List of Books and Pamphlets by Negro Authors for Paris Exposition and Library of Congress* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1900.)

organized an exhibition of books by black authors in 1918, he selected books by Blyden and another Westernized African, Samuel Crowther of Nigeria. Yet he also included a work by a traditional African writer: the French translation of the *Tarikh es-Soudan* by Es-Sa'di, an early history of the medieval kingdoms of West Africa.[15] The black intellectuals, seeking a new image of Africa, were turning to the once-despised African past.

In 1914 Jesse E. Moorland presented his personal collection of black art and literature to Howard University. For the next sixteen years gifts were added and some inadequate cataloging was done, but the Moorland Collection was not yet equipped to serve as an active research library. In 1930 the University took the significant step of appointing a professional librarian to supervise the development of the collection. Dorothy B. Porter, a black librarian with an MLS and experience in the Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library, held the position it until her retirement in 1972, seeing the Moorland Collection grow into a research center of world importance. By her own account Porter gained much of her specialized bibliographical knowledge in long discussions with the pioneering collectors.[16]

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15. Arthur A. Schomburg and Robert T. Browne, *Exhibition Catalogue, First Annual Exhibition of Books, Manuscripts, Paintings, Engravings, Sculptures, et cetera by the Negro Library Association* (New York: Poole Press Assoc., 1918).
16. Dorothy B. Porter, "Introduction: Fifty Years of Collecting" in Richard Newman, *Black Access: A Bibliography of Afro-American Bibliographies* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. xxi-xxiii.

Reviewing the annual reports from Dorothy Porter's long tenure with the Moorland Collection, one recognizes the pattern of goals set and accomplished in the long term, despite long periods of inadequate support when gifts were far more significant than purchases.

The nation's leading public library collection on black studies originated in the early 1920's, when New York's Harlem district rapidly became predominantly black. To meet the needs of this new community the New York Public Library appointed as director of its Harlem Branch the white librarian Ernestine Rose. Drawing on her experience serving needs of immigrant groups in the city, Rose sought to acquire "a large and representative body of material expressive of Negro culture in the past and present."[17] Under her leadership the Branch was transformed into a center for much of the cultural activity of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's, in which the bibliophile Arthur Schomburg was a major participant. Schomburg's collection, purchased by New York Public in 1926 for less than its market value, transformed the branch from a public library with an ethnic flavor into a research library of international significance.[18] Such future African leaders as Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana used the Schomburg Library during their studies in the United States.

The Africana accessions of the black collectors and institutions were primarily from Europe. The "scramble" for African territory in the late nineteenth century had left 90% of the continent under

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17. Rose to DuBois, 25 March 1924, W.E.B. DuBois Papers.

18. Arna Bontemps, "Special Collections of Negroana," *Library Quarterly* (July 1944): 191.

European rule and profoundly influenced the development of African nations. European governments promoted an image of Africans as children being led to the light by European paternalism. The published records concerning the continent were mediated by Europeans, while the literature of African protest and nationalism was either suppressed or ephemeral, in either case outside the customary book trade. Colonial administration required the establishment of specialized research institutions in each colonial power, and so the world's great library collections on Africa emerged in Europe. African colonial literature found its way to the United States through the major American collections on European countries; it was the European Division of the Library of Congress, for example, which handled most Africana.

A unique manuscript collection on colonial Africa was collected by Howell Wright, an American lawyer who had a hobbyist's fascination with southern Africa and the conquests of Cecil Rhodes.[19] From his Connecticut home Wright exchanged letters with more than four hundred South Africans who had taken part in the great conflicts between British and Afrikaner whites around the turn of the century, culminating in the South African War. Significantly, none of the names of Wright's correspondents is recognizably that of a black African or an Indian, though nonwhites were profoundly affected by the racial policy resulting from the British victory. To Wright their testimony was of little worth.

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19. Villette Young, "Rhodes Collection--A Lifetime Work for Howell Wright," *Hartford Courant Magazine* (12 July 1953) p. 7, clipping in Wright Papers, Yale University Library.

Wright donated his collection with accompanying publications to Yale University, and left an endowment for its continuation on his death in 1953, but his passing left nobody at the Yale library with his commitment to the subject, and collection development fell to a junior member of the History Department.[20] Wright's untiring efforts to give the United States a major collection on white southern Africa mark a turning point in Africana librarianship: the recognition that Africa itself could directly yield sources. The colonialist bias of Wright's collection detracts from its value, but combined with other manuscripts from the region it formed the foundation on which Yale's comprehensive South African collection was built.

The American missionary community in the twentieth century developed a new image of Africans as equal but different, and appropriate subjects for cross-cultural education of missionaries. The library of the Kennedy Institute of Mission included a special collection on Islam stressing Christian-Islamic relations, a key topic for the study of black Africa, where both Christian and Muslim missions are active.[21] The Missionary Research Library, an independent library founded in New York City in 1914, served missionary agencies with reports of mission agencies, supplemented

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20. John M.D. Crossey, Curator of Africana at the Yale University Library, to the author, 18 March 1987.

21. This collection was the legacy of the Arabic scholar and bibliophile Duncan Black MacDonald. Hartford Seminary, "Pre-Accreditation Self Study," 1986, pp. 3 and 23; idem., "Islamic Materials Questionnaire," 1986; both in the records of the Hartford Seminary Library.

with an interdisciplinary collection on the cultural environments in which missions operated and the "young churches" founded through their efforts.[22]

Public libraries, judged by the core lists used for collection development, had an image of Africa as a land of adventures. The core lists included titles as romantic as *Beyond the Utmost Purple Rim*, as morbid as *Hell-Hole of Creation*, as curious as *Behind God's Back*, and as fanciful as *Madagascar: The Land of the Man Eating Tree*.[23] Later travel literature included works by more serious authors such as John Gunther and Chester Bowles, who wrote perceptively of the rapid social change taking place during Africa's march toward independence.[24] The fiction collections as exemplified by H.W. Wilson's *Fiction Catalog*

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22. The Missionary Research Library was merged into the library of the Union Theological Seminary in 1929. William Moore Roberts, "The Missionary Research Library, 1914-1957: Some Aspects of its History and Service," thesis, MLS, Columbia University School of Library Service, 1957.

23. E. Alexander Powell, *Beyond the Utmost Purple Rim: Abyssinia, Somaliland, Kenya Colony, Zanzibar, the Comoros, Madagascar* (New York and London: Century Co., 1925); Lewis M. Nesbitt, *Hell-Hole of Creation: The Exploration of Abyssinian Danakil* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1935); Negley Farson, *Behind God's Back* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1941); Chase Salmon Osborne, *Madagascar, Land of the Man-Eating Tree* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1924).

24. John Gunther, *Inside Africa* (New York: Harper, 1955); Chester Bowles, *Africa's Challenge to America* (Berkeley: University of

showed a serious interest in the psychology of colonialism; Joseph Conrad's pioneering novel *Heart of Darkness* was followed by works of the anti-racist white South Africans Nadine Gordimer and Alan Paton, but no black African authors appeared in the *Fiction Catalog* until 1959.

One African nation that successfully resisted colonization was Ethiopia. Because Ethiopia was the bridge between the classical world and black Africa, and had an indigenous and independent form of Christianity it fascinated Western scholars. The New York Public Library's comprehensive collection on Ethiopia, begun early in the twentieth century, was the first American library collection with significant materials in African languages.[25]

During the Second World War foreign area studies gained sudden importance in the United States, and large numbers of area specialists entered government service. The Library of Congress recruited Ralph J. Bunche as its Associate Fellow on Modern Africa in 1943, the first official Africana specialist in an American research library. The bulk of LC's Africana bibliographic work during the war was done by Helen F. Conover of the European Division.[26] These bibliographies show that the war had given a new twist to the image of Africa as irrelevant; the bibliography on British colonies in Africa, for

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California Press, 1956.

25. George F. Black, *Ethiopica and Amharica: A List of Works in the New York Public Library* (New York: New York Public Library, 1928.)

26. Conover's published bibliographies are listed in Julian W. Witherell, "Africana in the Library of Congress," *Quarterly*

example, included forty references on communications and transportation, twenty-seven on German colonial claims, but only twenty-one on the "native problem."[27] Africa had become a strategic area, one minor problem of which was the presence of Africans.

A special collection of Africana was established to support war-related research at the University of Pennsylvania. After the war this collection was transferred to the Northwestern University Library, in recognition of the prominence in African studies of two members of Northwestern's anthropology faculty, William R. Bascom and Melville J. Herskovits. The newspapers and government publications complemented Northwestern's anthropological holdings to give a comprehensive view of modern Africa.[28] It was the strength of the collection that prompted Herskovits to propose the establishment of Northwestern's African studies program.[29] Six more African studies programs at American universities were founded in the 1950's.

At the Schomburg Library, too, the end of the war marked a turning point. The library served as the site of an international anticolonialist conference in 1945 with representatives of African and

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Journal of the Library of Congress 27 (July 1970):195-196.

27. Helen F. Conover, *The British Empire in Africa: Selected References* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1942).

28. "Library Strengthens African Collection," *Northwestern Library News* 3 (17 December 1948): 1, clipping in Jolly Papers, Northwestern University Archives.

29. David Jolly, "Northwestern University's African Program," in Robert Vosper, *Farmington Plan Survey: Final Report* (Chicago: Association of Research Libraries, 1959), p. 3.

Asian peoples welcomed by African-American leaders.[30] The library's national stature was growing, but it was still surprisingly little known in the New York area. Its facilities were chronically inadequate. W.E.B. Du Bois claimed that the Center was becoming the "orphan child of the New York Public Library."[31]

This was an apt metaphor. The Schomburg Center was a research library operated as a branch public library. Proposals to move the collection to the main research library on 42nd Street, which were sensible from the viewpoint of researchers, were resisted by the community. The black past had become a matter of local pride.[32] By 1960 the library had grown into a prominent area studies collection with strengths in African economics, missions, anthropology, linguistics, and literature.[33] When the Columbia University Library published a guide to library resources in the New York area in 1960, it identified the Schomburg collection as the main resource on

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30. Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 28-29.

31. Du Bois to Editor of the *New York Times*, 23 January 1948, in W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), vol. 3, p. 191.

32. Daniel J. Gore, "The Schomburg Collection and its Catalog: An Historical Sketch," thesis (MSLS), University of North Carolina, 1963, pp. 11-14.

33. Jean Blackwell Huston, "African Materials in the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History," *African Studies Bulletin* 3 (May 1960): [1]-4.

Africana. Even though the main research collections of the New York Public Library were far stronger in Africana than Schomburg's, the subject background of Schomburg's librarians undoubtedly made the difference.[34]

At Northwestern and Boston University librarians without background in African studies cooperated with Africanists without background in librarianship. At the Library of Congress, Helen F. Conover inherited the role if not the title of Africana librarian, with no professional Africanist on the staff until 1960. Hans E. Panofsky, appointed curator of the Africana collection at Northwestern University in 1959, was the first to bring to the field academic credentials in both library science and African studies.[35] During the 1950's these Africanists and librarians defined and dealt with the problems of Africana librarianship.

Collection development policies reflected the image of Africa that was promoted by the African studies programs: a region experiencing rapid social change leading toward independence. Despite the informational value of colonial government documents, many were biased and some were merely propaganda. The most pressing need was

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34. Joseph H. Doherty, "African Materials in the New York Public Library," 1961, typescript, records of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

35. Panofsky earned an MLS from Columbia University in 1952 and an MS in economics from Cornell University in 1958 with a thesis on migratory labor in Ghana. Hans E. Panofsky, curriculum vitae, n.d., courtesy Mr. Panofsky; idem, "The Significance of Labor Migration for the Economic Growth of Ghana," M.S. thesis, Cornell

for the recorded views of Africans past and present. The black institutions, where black authorship had traditionally been a major interest, were the best prepared in this area. An examination of the Moorland Collection's catalog of 1939 shows numerous works on native politics not found in the Library of Congress in the same period. The Moorland Collection was greatly strengthened by the purchase in 1946 of Arthur B. Spingarn's personal collection of black authors, ranging from rare narratives by ex-slaves to the works of modern authors from nearly all parts of the continent to narratives of travel to Africa by African-American authors.[36] The Moorland Collection was also the first American library to actively collect African newspapers. By 1954 Northwestern was actively collecting works of African authors on all subjects but only in European languages.[37] Political materials in African languages were still too ephemeral, despite their significance.

Even with regard to materials from Europe, American Africana librarians of the 1950's often seemed to be groping in the dark. In 1952 the Library of Congress published a bibliography of serials on African studies. Much of the information had to be established from secondary references, and a number of titles frequently cited in bibliographies were marked with question marks because no firm information on them could be located.[38] In 1958, David Jolly stressed

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University, 1958.

36. Dorothy B. Porter, "The African Collection at Howard University," *African Studies Bulletin* 2 (January 1959): 18-19.

37. Jolly to Lusaka Book Shop, 3 September 1954, Jolly Papers, Northwestern University Archives.

"vigilance and hard work," using "every available catalog, book review, and bibliography."[38]

Acquisitions from Africa were similarly difficult. African booksellers stressed the high-volume textbook trade and often sold little of local interest. Visiting Kenya, Jolly found that

> one can rarely find the European government printer. One can find his Asian or Goan assistant who may or may not understand what is wanted--and the request may or may not be acted on by the Africans who do the work. But this one learns to accept with good grace and be polite but persistent in striving toward the objective.[40]

Northwestern made frequent use of scholars visiting Africa, but the researchers often lacked a librarian's sense of collection development. One scholar who was asked to collect sources on land tenure in Somalia sent back some South African materials to which the library had a standing order, plus a monograph on Qantas, the Australian airline.[41] The Library of Congress, in contrast, dealt with publishers through American diplomatic posts throughout the continent, and had a wealth of materials for

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38. Krould to Librarian of Congress, June 1952, in Library of Congress, *Continuing Sources for Research on Africa* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1952.), p. [i].
39. Jolly, "Northwestern University's African Program," p. 7.
40. David M. Jolly, "Letter from Mr. Jolly re African Acquisition," Appendix IV in Association of Research Libraries, *Minutes of the 1956 Meeting*, Archives of the Association of Research Libraries, p. 29.

exchange.[42]

The cataloging of Africana produced special initiatives; the Schomburg Library attempted to identify on the catalog card the race of each author, while the Moorland Collection catalog gave the nationalities of black authors.[43] The most difficult problem in the cataloging of Africana materials was the establishment of subject headings for the names of African peoples and languages. Anthropologists had done little to standardize ethnic names, and even the word "tribe" was subject to different interpretations.[44] The Library of Congress, whose subject headings were the standard for American libraries, added names of African peoples to the list with no overall plan, apparently basing its decisions on the usage in the books cataloged. In contrast, the catalogers at the Schomburg Collection were profoundly concerned with Africa and put much effort into establishing appropriate headings.[45] This work had its reward; in 1960 the Curator reported that Africanists were "especially grateful and complimentary about the simplicity and accuracy of the

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41. Ibid.

42. "Summary Statement on the African Procurement Program of the Library of Congress," in Vosper and Talmadge, *Farmington Plan Survey*.

43. Dorothy B. Porter, "Introduction" to *Dictionary Catalog of the Jesse E. Moorland Collection* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1970), pp.3-4; Gore, "The Schomburg Collection and its Catalog," pp. 42-45.

44. H.A. Wieschoff, *Anthropological Bibliography of Negro Africa* (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1948), p. 1.

45. L.D. Reddick, "The State of the Schomburg Collection," MS, August

catalog of the Schomburg Collection."[46]

The founding of the African Studies Association in 1957 provided the first forum for national library cooperation. Together the Africana librarians laid out the plans for bibliographic and acquisitions work on a national scale, culminating in the establishment of the African Division of the Library of Congress in 1960.

In 1964 Paul Bohannan wrote,

> Africa has, for generations now, been viewed through a web of myth so pervasive and so glib that understanding it becomes a twofold task: the task of clarifying the myth and the separate task of examining whatever reality has been hidden behind it. Only as it is stated and told can the myth be stripped away. Only if the myth is stripped away can the reality of Africa emerge.[47]

By 1960, when a wave of newly independent African nations forced the continent into the public eye, American Africana librarians had developed the skills and institutions that would make them a force to counter the mythical images of Africa.

1940, records of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

46. New York Public Library. Schomburg Collection, "Annual Report," 1959-1960, MS, records of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

47. Paul Bohannan, *Africa and Africans* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1964), p. 1.